

# FREAKING



Dancing can express sexuality and rebellion against authority, which are symbols Hollywood has embraced in such movies as 'Footloose,' 'Dirty Dancing' and 'Dance With Me' (above).

## What the kids say about the banned dance

By **NICOLE D'ARCY**  
HIGH SCHOOL INTERN

"Dancing is dancing. It doesn't mean we're simulating sex," argues one senior from a Chicago high school in an Internet chat room.

He's talking about freaking, the latest dance craze to put principals and parents on edge.

At Santa Cruz High, freak-dancing has been banned because the principal considered it too sexually suggestive.

But is freaking really all that bad?

"It's a good workout, it's fun, and it's a different way to dance," said Soquel High junior Michael George.

"If everything has to be conventional, why do it?"

Since Santa Cruz High banned freak-dancing at school dances, students have protested

that their freedom of expression is being taken away.

"They (adults) never wanted to dance like their parents did," Michael George pointed out.

He insists that scenes in TV shows and music videos are more sexually suggestive than the dancing at a high school dance.

Many students were surprised when school officials banned the dance.

"We reacted by feeling that our rights had been violated," explained Damian Ashton, a student body officer at Santa Cruz High.

Some students at the school misinterpreted the ban: They thought it meant that they couldn't dance closely with their partners, because "freaking" is an all-encompassing term.

The students went to the principal to clarify the fine line between acceptable and unacceptable dance moves.

After negotiations with principal Tony Kuns, various degrees of dancing will be allowed at school dances. But explicit interactions will still be banned.

"He (principal Kuns) basically agreed that he won't bring out the ruler," said Ashton, referring to the practice in the '50s when the distance between dancers was strictly measured.

Complaints about dancers go back further than that, for hundreds of years, as each generation experiments with new forms of expression through dance.

In 1962 the Twist was banned in New York Catholic schools.

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### Can't stop the waltz

Freaking is not the first dance craze to bring out the bans. Other dances have run into disapproving authorities:

■ 150 BC: All dancing schools are closed in Rome, where dancing is considered a dangerous activity for the masses.

■ 300 AD: Christian Church leaders and St. Augustine reject dancing as a catalyst for sexual permissiveness, lust and ecstasy.

■ 800 AD: Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne officially prohibits dancing.

■ Middle Ages: The Dance of Death emerges across Europe as an underground dance mania, a

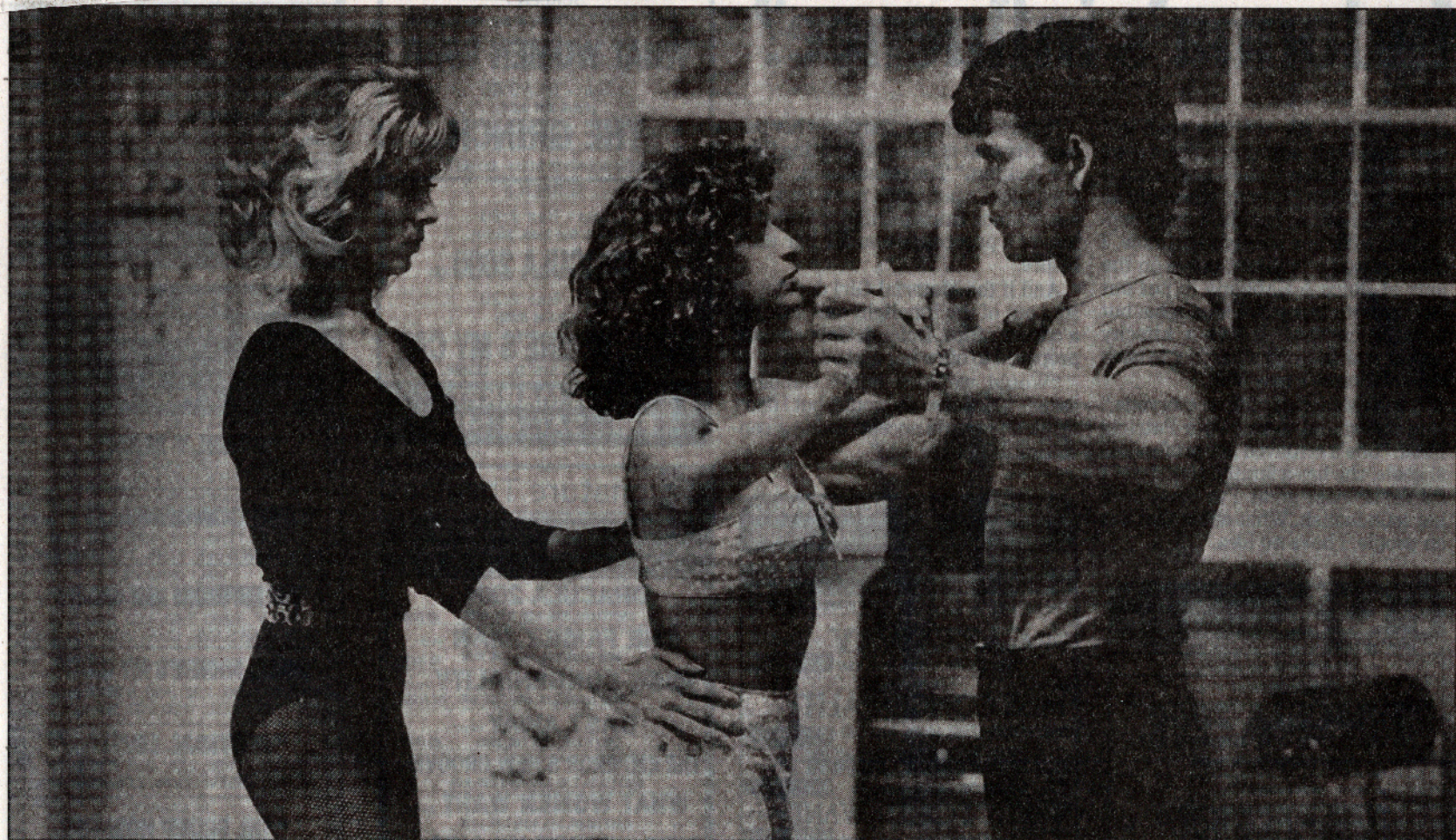
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A scene from the 1987 film 'Dirty Dancing.'

## Dance

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Music by the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, the Doors and Bob Dylan (and the way people danced to their songs) was banned for being sexually suggestive.

But so was Strauss' waltz, which was banned at the end of the 18th century to "guard public morals."

"Millennium teens are proving as innovative and rebellious as baby boomers once were in their music. So trying to stop the newest dance craze may drive authorities crazy.

*Nicole D'Arcy is a sophomore at Merit Academy in Soquel.*

## Craze

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protest against the suppression by the church and a reaction to the Black Plague.

■ 1800s: Europeans ban dancing and drumming in Asia and Polynesia for being too earthy and sexual.

■ 1800s: The Waltz is banned in Europe, where it is considered a "fiend of German birth" and a peril to health and morals.

The waltz is considered coarse and lascivious because of the intimate

physical contact between its performers.

■ 1925: The flappers' favorite dance, the Charleston, is blamed for the collapse of Boston's Pickwick Club, where 44 people die.

But the Boston City Council fails to ban effectively "the dance that destroyed a building."

■ 1956: Elvis' pelvis-shaking is banned from television, where he is pictured from the waist-up only.

■ 1962: The Twist is banned in New York Catholic Schools by Bishop Burke for being lewd and un

Christian.

■ 1980s: The Lambada (a dance performed with the man's right leg placed between the thighs of his partner) is banned in Brazil.

The dance is marketed in the United States "as an alternative to sex in the age of AIDS."

■ 1996: The Macarena is banned in North Carolina schools for inappropriate lyrics and hip-shaking.

■ 2000: Freaking, the dance of millennium teens, is banned by Santa Cruz school officials.